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# VERSES FROM A VAGRANT MUSE.

JOSEPH DANA MILLER

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# VERSES

FROM A

# VAGRANT MUSE

JOSEPH DANA MILLER

HARTFORD CONN

HUMAN JOSEPH SENCH

1894

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TO MY MOTHER, WHO [illegible] TO WHOSE [illegible] AND ENCOURAGEMENT [illegible] TENCE OF EXE[illegible] CONTAINED WITHIN THESE [illegible] VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY [illegible]

THE AUTHOR

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# PREFACE

THE VERSES [illegible]

SERIOUS.

## THE STORY OF PITHOLE.

A stranger in seeing would hardly guess
That these wooded hills, so dull and brown,
And all this sleeping wilderness,
Not long ago was a busy town.
A town built up in the hills, that rose
Like a thing of Aladdin's wonderful lamp,
Where each could be at his will what he chose,
Quiet gentleman, graceless scamp.

It was in the summer of '65;
It's an "ower true tale" as ever was told,—
As singular story as any alive
In all of the eastern fables of old,
That t'ward the rugged, unbroken vast
Of Pennsylvania, some pilgrims went,
Discovering oil; ere a fortnight passed
Fully a thousand had pitched their tent.

Life in its infinite varied mood,
Clang of hammers and blows of steel,
Broke on the rapt and slumbering wood,
Hum of hasp and whisper of wheel.

Fast the arms of the engines flew,
  Fast they drew from the generous earth
Riches of oil, as limpid and blue,
  As the rocks that housed it and gave it birth.

Wells were drilled and a marvelous yield
  Incited the reckless spirit of gain,
The thirst of avarice; nights revealed
  The uneasy heart and the aching brain.
Of lives crushed out in that mad pursuit
  Of piteous moans, and prayers unheard,
And lives of women trod underfoot,
  The voice of rumor says never a word.

Yonder, over that wooded cove,
  A young girl sprang in her wild despair,
Onto the rocks, with a cry that clove
  The heavy, humid, unwilling air;
Dead leaves fell pattering to the ground,
  The sky was calm, and the air came cool,
When in the morning her face was found,
  Framed dead and whitely above the pool.

On Saturday nights, the tavern's din
  Is frightful as noises that come from hell;
And wild-faced women go reeling in;
  Outside are the stars and the dreamy dell;

Within, the fumes of tobacco bowls,
  The deep, hoarse laugh and the fiercer shout,
And the evil song, as the music rolls
  Its notes from the wheezy organ out.

What fortunes were made in a single day!
  Till the earth was drained, and gave no more
Of her riches of oil, and there vanished away
  All her wealth like chaff from the threshing floor;
And lives now ruined from Pithole sore,
  Departed that came in that mad pursuit,
Where honor and love can rule no more,
  And faith in our kind is trod under foot.

Gold! it is bargained for woman's fame!
  Gold! it is bargained for young girl's tears!
For wisdom and faith and an honored name,
  For infant joys and our manhood's years.
All, all are sold in this barter of men.
  All that our teachers have taught is wise,
Is lost in the scramble nor found again—
Let fall the scales from our blinded eyes!

Is it wealth that out on meadows and plains
  Grows harvests; is't wealth that reaps it again?
And tho' wealth builds bridges, and towers and fanes,
  And makes great cities, *it can't make men!*

And work is good for the thing it brings,
  Work is noble of hand or brain,
And give to the worker his share of things,
  And our age no longer would grasp and strain.

## AT THE GATE OF THE MORNING

WE wait at the threshold of dawning,
At the portals of freedom we wait;
There is light in the East! it is morning!
Lo! swings on its hinges the gate!

We have waited, while God in heaven
Has hidden His face from our sight;
But the mountains of darkness are riven,
And see; on the hills there is light!

Pale, pallid, and hastening onward
Are slaves who have broken their chains;
And the course of the ages is sunward,
And over glittering plains!

Break crown! there's an end of crowning;
Break sceptre! the sceptre is past;
Who cares if the monarch is frowning,
The peasant is King at last.

Bow not! there's an end of bowing—
We may doff to the princess the hat,
But Fanny—the fashion allowing,
Is fairly entitled to that.

Not for all her silks and laces,
  And diamonds that flash in her hair,
Can she match with her queenliest graces
  The girl in the window there!

Break signet! the people are signers;
  Break thrones! they are stupid things;
We, who are the sole designers
  And builders of states, are Kings!

Break cannon! for who does the fighting?
  Not those who the glory share;
Not for us are the trophies and knighting,
  And plaudits that ring in the air.

But for us there is death in the battle;
  Nameless grave in the sod;
Just to be killed like cattle
  Under the eyes of God.

No matter if routed or routing,
  Whether we lose or win,
Always in midst of the shouting
  The tyrant goes riding in!

So when sceptre and cannon are breaking,
  Peace shall awaken, and then,
We shall have our own for the taking,
  And cease to be foes, and be men!

We wait at the threshold of dawning,
  At the portals of freedom we wait;
There is light in the East! it is morning!
  Lo! swings on its hinges the gate!

## SHAKSPEARE.

AND can it be that he who knew
The things we blindly scan,
Was born of woman, lived and grew
Like any other man?

That he whose head was in the sky,
To please our idle age
In spangled buskins strutted by,
Upon a London stage?

That he whose spirit lurks to thrill
The coming centuries in,
Like any roysterer drunk his fill,
With comrades at an inn?

That he—but why such queries put?
The demi-god is dead;
The past its dungeon doors have shut
Upon the kingliest head!

Yet *think*—this regal soul that strode
The earth, kept not apart,
But mingling freely, shared the load
Borne by the common heart

And he, the king, who spoke as not
  One human tongue has done,
Was parcel of the common lot,
  And of the earth, her son.

Like Alfred, ere from peasant's hearth
  He sought his throne at night,
A boor of inconsiderate worth,
  In an unkingly plight.

Thus they the man of Avon met,
  As you and I might meet—
He is the man of Avon yet,
  But Kings are at his feet!

## NAMING THE DEAD BABY.

WITH its innocence undefiled,
Whom Death hath so soon reclaimed,
What shall we name the child
That lies in the grave unnamed?

Alice, Margerie, May,
Seem names too much like earth
For a babe six months and a day
Between its death and its birth.

So, wife, let's call her "Angel,"
Not solely our child alone,
But a little spirit lent us
From a perfect world unknown;

A growing life that in passing
Made the earth a moment's rest,
And borrowed a baby's beauty,
And drew from a woman's breast.

Now stilling its infant violence,
With its wonderful laughter sealed,
It passes into the silence
With its secret unrevealed!

## HEINE AT BOULOGNE.

HEINE, passing through the town,
Sad, forlorn, and quite alone,
Saw a little English girl
On a visit to Boulogne.

Many times he passed her by,
And her brown eyes seemed to say,
"Poor, pale stranger, are you ill,
Do you suffer much to-day?"

Then with lips she questioned him,
And he took her soft, brown hands,
"I'm a German poet, dear,
Famous in all German lands.

"Sweet brown eyes that question me,
Dear brown eyes, I answer you:
When they speak the greatest names
Heine's name is mentioned, too.

"And what ails me? Ah, dear maid;
Brown eyes, I will answer you;
When they speak the saddest pains,
Heine's pains are mentioned, too."

## THE PORTRAIT OF AN ANCESTOR.

HE looks a solemn figure in the frame,
Wasted and wan, as when some giant oak
Is smitten by the lightning's sudden flame,
Scorched to its heart of iron by the stroke.
A Titan of a man, but one cast down
From some high pedestal by blow of fate;
A kingly brow that might have worn a crown,
Though dowered with the world's scorn and its hate.

Lips that once spoke in sweetness solemn things,
Eyes from whose blue and faded depths outshone
Lights of lost worlds and rare imaginings,
Of hopes gone forth and high faiths overthrown.
What strength of passion has the painter limned
On eyes and lips in wondrous sternness curled;
Great loves renounced and aspirations dimmed,
And high resolves broken against the world.

Upon the features sits a still disdain,
And on the brow, most marvelously fair,
Lessons of grief, and knowledge that is pain,
And wisdom that is sorrow, graven there.
One who could feel, yet never once repine,
Suffer in silence; with unfaltering breath,
Would look his last, giving nor word nor sign,
With steadfast eyes *into* the eyes of death.

## MY LADY.

SHE sleeps! The night is coming,
And now the slumberous whir
Of bat, the partridge drumming,
The cricket's ceaseless stir,
The bee and locust humming,
Come drowsily to her.

Oh, red-lipped! Oh, blue-orbed!
Oh, temper like the skies!
Oh, daylight of thy forehead!
Oh, star-shine of thy eyes!
Oh, midnight of thy raven
Hair, blown in starry eyes!

Thy voice! shall poet sing it
Or set its notes to tune?
The throat of bird or linnet
Pours forth at hush of noon;
No song that has within it
A finer, subtler tune.

Oh, how shall artist paint thee—
The glory of thy smile?
With aureole glimmering faintly
Above thy head the while—
The tremulous and saintly
Rapt splendor of thy smile?

## IN THE BEER GARDEN.

MY Gretchen in the garden sings
With youthful voice and shrilly;
Her songs they are the poorest things,
Her gestures weak and silly;
Her age hath hardly reached sixteen,
She seems a school-girl merely;
Her smiles you scarce know what they mean,
Her ways affect one queerly.

Yet are her eyes as faintly blue
As skies in twilight weather;
Her hair of lightly yellow hue,
Bound up in pleats together.
I watch her little hands that all
The time her fan keeps fanning;
Her feet and girlish limbs are small,
Her waist scarce two hands' spanning.

Poor Gretchen, little silly thing,
I drink, and pay my money;
I sit and watch thee stand and sing;
How sad it is, and funny.

Thou givest smiles to him who pays
  The waiter for thy drinking;
I look upon thy foolish ways,
  And laugh, and fall a-thinking.

Poor Gretchen, thou hast little chance
  Of any good thing winning,
But God shall judge the circumstance,
  Deducting from the sinning.
Man hath not eye to weigh by rule
  The meed and share of pardon
Due to the Gretchen of the school,
  And Gretchen of the garden.

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## DEAD.

GOOD-BY, sweet soul! Thou diest as music dies,
Or flame, or star, or smile. Dear heart, good-by.
How shall we vex the autumn air with sighs,
Or rail at Nature, and the brassy sky—
That stubborn wall veiling God's secrecy.

Long shall thy memory linger, fresh and fine,
As scent of flowers crushed. Thy perfect mouth,
As odorous as the lowly jessamine,
Fixed in its sweet defiance 'gainst untruth,
And the dear charm of thy immaculate youth.

Thine eyes, those starry wonders, blotted out,
Dear lamps the soul enkindled for the sake
Of any poor world-mariner blown about;
Sweet Pity in thy look did hourly wake
'Till Death those shining lamps in anger brake.

Oh, was she not a creature of the sky,
With laughter like a lark's note, and as fine
As flute whose rich pulsations rise and die
Through echoing valleys of the Appenine?
Was not her song rich as Italian wine?

How could the daylight of her brow be gloomed
  In death, or warmth of passionate pity chilled,
Or flame of her dear ardency consumed,
  Or that white chalice, with rich wine o'er-filled,
  Into the sensual maw of night be spilled?

## AFTER DEATH.

'TWAS in that other land across
The seas of death they met again;
Their features wore a sign of loss,
And gleams of unextinguished pain.

"And do we meet again," he said,
"In this strange spirit-peopled space,—
This long-imagined land of shade—
Still with thy eastern pride of face?"

"Alas, I suffered much," she said,
"I loved, but could not speak from fear:
I did not dream that thou wert dead.
Good bye! I cannot linger here."

He saw her pass, and wild and rife
Ran olden memories in his heart;—
The pride that severed them in life,
Still kept them in that place apart.

## DEAD.

SLEEP, patient lady! In thy chamber sleep;
Blue sky and silence wall thee round about;
Nothing shall rouse thy slumber, long and deep,
While we with breaking hearts must wait without
Under a starless night of clouds and doubt.

O, stubborn earth! fold to thy jealous breast
That purest soul! O, viewless heavenly ones,
That walk in places where the buried rest,
Invisible by light of earthly suns,
Who go your rounds till Time his journey runs,

Care for my darling—hold her spirit hands,
Smooth her pale forehead, ask her what she would;
Trust me, she is not fretful in demands;
She is a type of patient womanhood;—
Care for my love—she will be very good.

## SONNET.

THIS is the truth—the end of law is love;
There is a further goal beyond our goals;
Our lighter wills a higher will controls—
And out of death and dark a light may merge
Somewhere, sometime, upon earth's outer verge.
Though wrecked upon life's quicksands and its shoals,
And borne to sea—the broader sea is peace,
Comfort, and reparation, and release,
And rest—and over all things sitteth Love,
Last nurse of all, mother of human souls,
Who waits with her warm bosom for our head,
And tender care for all the faithful dead,
With touch, maybe, reviving them again—
So pass the stern souls of heroic men.

## A SIMILITUDE.

THE sun in seas of glory setting fair
Tinges the mountain's brow,
Where a lone bird, far from the fowler's snare,
Sets sail—God knoweth how;
In all the silence of the breathless air,
Where goest thou?

God grant in that day coming on apace,
When all grows dark about,
The soul that sails in realms of shoreless space,
From island lands of doubt,
May trust the unseen Hand with equal grace,
And put as calmly out!

## THE OLD DREAMS.

THE dear old dreams are dead, and come no more,
The cross lies prone upon the sepulchre;
And where the women went to weep for thee,
Christ, there is silence in Gethsemane!
Lichens enwreath the altars; near and far
In newer radiance pales the Bethlehem star.
Christ with his shining countenance passes on,
His dream a shattered dream, His Kingdom done.
But where dead temples rear themselves on high,
Lo! there is newer meaning in the sky.
Though dead things go, yet shall the living come,
New Voices, though the older Voice be dumb.
Creeds fail, but Man endures—with painful tread
To newer harvests over sheafs of dead,
He goes, and suns that shone on other years
Are dead, and all his tears are idle tears.
Truth is more blessed than a thousand dreams,
Nature's unerring law than all our schemes,
On Sinias sound the timbrels joyfully;
In old Jerusalem and by Galilee—
The sombre places saddened by the tale
Of cross and crucifix, the shadows fail,
But over cross and crucifix uprears
The promise and the hope of golden years.

## BABYLON.

QUEEN Semiramus, whom the years,
Some thousands, partly shroud from view,
Clad in her royal robes appears,
With that old beauty, always new,
On city's walls her chariots flew,
Their white wheels flashing in the sun;
But round those gates of brass there drew
Silent, the doom of Babylon.

God Belus in his Temple sat,
His golden altars and his shrines;
His priests their long devotions at,
Pursued their rituals and their signs,
And quaffed the daintiest Chaldean wines.
What things were on these altars done
Shame, the gross chronicle resigns—
O fair, O faithless Babylon!

O dreary waste, O solitude!
Of all that glory held secure;
An empire and a race subdued,
And lost in an ignoble lure;—
The riches of the world made poor.
To those the laws of God that shun,
His vengeance cometh swift and sure,
Saith the dead lips of Babylon!

## WHERE A MURDER WAS DONE.

NO bloom can there unfold that does not wear
The token of the inheritance of blood;
No breeze be wafted, but each flower fair
In guilty fright turns up her scarlet hood
To hide her face; the lowly maiden fern
Shakes down her silver hair, all white with terror.
When Night embarks his squadron on the sky,
And all the gold that flames in Day's bright even
His sooty hands to his own ships consign,
He whose clear eye is tutored to discern
Marks here a heavier gloom, a darker sign
Than Night's black wing can throw; a sudden chill
Strikes to the sense and holds the loud speech dumb,
The limbs fast locked, the brain without a will.
Now let the vision mark! Here, here they come!
Two figures, hand in hand; from eyes of one
Looks mercy pityingly; the other lifts
Orbs, oh, so sad! it seems all sorrows gone
In that one look are gathered. Slowly drifts
The autumn leaves around them, and they sit,

One placid, and the other agonized,
With hands still clasped, and fast the shadows flit,
Flit and are gone, and they by day surprised
Rise and depart, brushing the early dew.
I saw it all, clearly as I see you.

## JUSTICE AND CHARITY.

I CARE not for your fine poetic flame,
  Nor heart of flowing sentiment that stays
But with the passing cause by which it came,
  The ebullient pity of the summer days.
Your heart, transfixed by shining spears of love,
  Leaps to the glory of strong hope, and in it
  Bathes in the burning ecstasy of the minute,
And moves in realms our sordid earth above.

And yet, and yet! pure thoughts and radiant hopes,
  What are they but the idle dreams of man?
The weaving of the sea sands into ropes,
  Since ever this mad world her course began?
Justice is mighty; Charity is weak,
  Entering at doors that open in the sea;
  A Sisyphus; her work immensity;
Resign thy task; let stronger Justice speak!

Without obeyance of her law, not one
  Of all sweet Charity's bright dreams come true;
Without we walk in way of Justice, none
  Shall seasons of the Golden age renew.
Not till we meet and vanquish human wrongs
  Moving toward freedom till we break the chain
  That binds the limbs of freemen; then again
May all the happy-hearted sing glad songs.

## PERSONALITY.

OUR personality inviolate,
So sacred, awful and mysterious,
Bound in the enigmatic house of fate—
Who is there shall unbar the door for us?
The mother holds her child close to her knee;
Alas! for the deceptive dream of speech,
For in the soul's dim fastnesses doth each
From each one dwell apart as if a sea
Ran leagues between them. Naked and alone
We come into the world. Our sole appeal
Is our great father Time, with lips of stone—
God's one true prophet shall all things reveal.

## LINES TO AN ABOLITIONIST.

HE saw a war for freedom won,
And ere that noble life he gives,
While in his veins the fire lives,
He sees a grander work begun.

And ere he goes, his high heart full
Of hope for all the human race,
He sees the great truth face to face,
And dares to name it Beautiful.

And as a warrior's arm that's spent
With fighting, ere the spirit goes,
He strikes a few and sturdy blows,
And speaks the word, and goes content.

By Pharisees and Scribes in scorn
What matter though the truth is held;
Hath not his aged eyes beheld
The glory of the breaking dawn?

The vista of a grander view,
The manhood of a nobler race;
And the world's wider market-place,
Which once man's bars and barriers knew.

And ships of commerce in their track
  Bring freightage from the farthest lands,
  And everywhere are willing hands
To draw them, none to hold them back.

For war is over; cannons lie
  Upturned on hillsides, and the guns
  Rest silent under smiling suns,
And little children, passing by,

Tell with a shudder how there broke
  Within this valley's quiet spot
  The thunders of the battle, hot
With hate, and fire, and cannon smoke;

And how the hideous carnage made
  The brassy heavens to weep their tears;
  The tale is done—the crimsoned years
In mists unreal fail and fade.

---

Truth hath no law profound as this
  Greed cheateth greed; self-interest leaves
  No hope for self, and self deceives—
Who seeks the good of man, finds his.

Who sees a wrong and strikes it down
  With stern indifference, counting not
  All worldly loss, has cast his lot
With those the King of kings shall crown.

And truth can for her triumph wait;
  Men worship her upon a throne,
  But only they are freedom's own
Who know her suppliant at the gate;

Who all their hearts' affection bring,
  Their life, their light, their days, their all;
  And care not if they stand or fall
For her, a persecuted thing.

And when the coming ages write
  These names on Freedom's muster roll,
  *His* name shall gleam upon the scroll—
Soldier of liberty, good night!

## WHEN I AM DEAD.

WHEN we die we must be mourned,
People wet their eyes for us;
And our dust is wreathed and urned—
What a dismal fuss!
Will you see when I am dead,
Chum of mine, who loveth me,
That my plighted friends shall wed;
Sing around me merrily;
Stir the punch-bowl at my head;
Have the baby christened near;
Whisper in the tiny ear
That I am not truly dead;
But that it has come to pass
That the half of me has fled—
That I am not what I was.
Though they do not understand,
Nor the secret hope to tell,
They have faith that He who planned
Life, hath planned death also well.
Seeing which it must be good
That the merry bells be rung,
And there be a feast of food,

And a happy song be sung
For a right good fellow gone,
Where and how they may not say—
All are no more wise than one,
And of prophets there are none
To enlighten them to-day;
All they know—he went away.

## MUTABILITY.

THE king hath power for a day!
  What then the monarch's smile or frown?
Mitre and crozier, what are they?
  Sceptre and signet, sword and crown?

A narrow grave hath Timour, him
  Before whom nations bowed them down,
And Himalayas, rising dim,
  With austere irony look on.

See Becket mount his steed, the king
  Holding the stirrup for his grace;
But later see the bishop's brains
  Dashed redly on the altar place.

See Cromwell from a gibbet swung!
  A mass of poor, dismembered bones—
Who wrought a nation's freedom, hung
  For London mobs to pelt with stones.

Power! an airy, baseless dream!
  Glories! they vanish at a breath!
Only the mind hath rule supreme,
  And triumphs over fate and death!

## LINES.

WE know the going of the sun;
We know its coming, as of yore;
But man lies down, and wakens not
Till the heavens are no more.
But the fine character of speech,
The large, free word and generous deed—
These are the things that shall outlive
The body and the creed.

He who builds for all the age,
He shall find the pillars strong,
When the spirit shall awake,
After death hath kept him long;
He shall find the truth he told,
He shall find the lamp he lit
Burning; careful hands have trimmed,
Earnest eyes have followed it.

## ROBIN REDBREAST.

ROBIN redbreast, on the hill,
  Tell me that old legend, tell
How thou broughtest in thy bill
  Dew for the parched lips of hell;
Little faith have I, but still,
  Monkish tongues have told it well.

Robin redbreast, is it true?
  Does thy bosom, then, attest
Tale of thy parent bird who flew
  In that mercy-tending quest,
Struck with fire, whose livid hue
  Flames to scarlet on thy breast?

## MY LOVE ASLEEP.

WHEN the fair morn wi' purple hue 'gan shine,
And sleepy swallows crouching under eaves,
Came out and made sweet music in the leaves,
And shook the rosy air with tiny cries,
My Love awoke, and oped her pretty eyes.

My Love awoke! Dear heart, she wakes no more;
Death holds her—what a mighty clutch he keeps!
Her fine eyes closed that spake a wiser lore,
Than any seer's. How very still she sleeps!
In at her tomb a curious swallow peeps.

Go in, thou marvellous bird; she lieth there,
She will not answer to the words you taught her,
The gold hath faded from her wondrous hair,
And her sweet laughter, like the gurgling water,
Is frozen in her throat—Oh, piteous slaughter!

At which the bird, striking its little wing
In sad farewell against the portal door,
Cleaved the still air—Oh, happy, singing thing;
You think of the dear heart ye loved no more,
Is mine or thine, thou bird, the wiser lore?

## WHOM I SLEW IN BATTLE.

I MET one night in Phantomland
Mine enemy, whom I did smite
To death with murderous, armed hand;
His face was bloody from the fight,
Yet full his eyes of kindly light.

"Fear not," for I had hid mine eye;
"The world is far away and dark,
You struck me fair home to the mark;
And all your human passions lie
In unrevealed obscurity."

And then he passed; I know not how
It is I see him; but he came
And placed my hand upon my brow
In kindly wise; the angry flame
Seems dead; himself is not the same.

He is all love and gentleness;
A finer spirit in his tone,
Which hath strong potency to bless,
And some days, sitting quite alone,
I pray his blessed shape be shown.

And then a step without; a breath,
  A draught of a diviner air,
And then, not in the guise of death,
  But fair as life, with face more fair,
  He stands in answer to my prayer.

Dear comforter and sacred guest!
  Peace go upon thy cloudy way;
And threatening shapes, if such invest
  Thy path, as was thy hand of clay,
  Oh, spirit hand, be strong to slay!

Comrade! if I may comrade call
  Whom I did meet on many a field,
'Twas gallant work; the shock, recall,
  Retreat and rout; the horses wheeled
  Away; the trampled plate and shield;

The tattered banners; swords that clung
  In stiffened hands; the frowning wood
Whose blackened oaks so mutely swung
  Their branches. Ah! the sport were good,
  But for that waste of human blood.

You know all this, my spirit friend;
  A brutal sport. The world grows wise,
Which meaneth better; and the end
  You know. I've seen it in your eyes,
  Where much unwritten knowledge lies.

## WHAT A GHOST HAS TO SAY.

DOWN the broad cathedral nave
  Poured the requiem like a sea,
And I stood beside my grave
  After they had buried me.

And the friends who loved me soon
  Dried the tear upon the cheek,
Some wept all the afternoon,
  And some mourned me for a week.

And the mourners' homes I sought,
  And I sat their hearths beside,
And I chuckled as I thought
  I was with them who had died.

One, a parson, as he rose,
  I beside him sat a wraith—
Grieved, the most part through his nose;
  I had died not in the faith.

And my Jenny, combing down
  Her long strands of dusky hair,
Said, between a smile and frown,
  That her days were full of care;

But that crying would not mend
  What was past, and who should tell,
'T were not best it thus should end?
  Black at least became her well.

And the public prints were full
  Of my praises; what I'd writ
They discovered beautiful
  In its salient gleams of wit.

In its love of all things fair,
  In its true poetic rage—
Everything that was not there
  They descried on every page.

And my works in cloth and calf
  Shone along the dealer's shelves,
But I heard the wise men laugh
  Very softly to themselves.

Even they cannot agree,
  These the wiser, and the few;
So it does n't worry me—
  Ghosts have other things to do.

## A VISION OF JUSTICE.

NOT as the Greeks once saw her did she look,
With blinded eyes and smiting sword uplift,
As one who in requital could not brook
The thought of mercy to the tyrant, lest
Some weakness in the avenger stand confessed,
But with a sweet, entreating gesture, mild
As the unspoken pleading of the child,
She brings a peace to all of human kind;
Tyrant and slave are equal heirs of her
When she shall come—when all the world astir
Shall rise and free the long enchained mind,
Banish the leaden cloud, and hail the sky.
I saw the form of Justice, throned high,
With her sweet eyes, ineffably kind.

## ON THE HILLS.

I STOOD upon the hills.
The landscape stretched in distance, and I saw
Fields of bright corn, and little silver rills
That threaded the green plain. Above, the sun
Hung, a red globe of fire. Far away
The seas with angry thunders beat upon
The shores like conquering armies. Distant far
The church steeple with its golden cross,
Like a miraculously uplifted star,
Shone on the sky. O blessed symbol raised,
When this, the earth, is in her pleasant mood
(For which the giver of the cross be praised)—
The sign shall touch our heart, and it is good.

Beyond the landscape, what? The living God,
Love and his presence hallowing all the place,
And blossoming into flowers through the sod.
In this June day, Peace with her blessed face,
Hath banished war even from the heart of man,
And love for God is love for all the race.

What is the end of all? Are we to go,
Just like a match struck in a darkened room—

Flames but a moment in the shadow, so
  We catch a glimpse of things upon the wall
Rare and most beautiful, and then they fade,
  Upon the dying light, and that is all?

If that be so, wherefore this heavenly scene?
  Wherefore the exaltation in the heart?
Wherefore should all the waving trees be green?
  Or birds return that from their nests depart?
If that be true, break up these lofty hills;
  Shatter the sun that calls life from the ground;
Freeze up the rivers and the tinkling rills,
  And let the tiresome earth no more go round

It is a hideous lie none have believed,
  Not since a grave was dug upon the plain,
Or sorrowing heart above a dead one grieved,
  Not since the planted seed broke forth in grain.

O landscape, and O Mind beyond the sky!
  O sea, and Hand that holds the great seas back!
O sun, and Life that like the sun shall die
  Not with its setting in its fiery track.
O birds, and Eye that sees the dear birds fall!
  O hills, and Strength beyond the great hills'
    strength!
All that we see, and what above it all
  We do not see, shall be revealed at length.

For what we feel and what we merely seem,
  The mirage that we look on, and earth's show
Are but phantoms of a pleasant dream,
  And Grief a shadow that we do not know.

The night is on the hill,
  Darkness upon the seas and in the skies;
  Below me all the happy valley lies,
And everything is still!
God has moved not, He has not left the place;
  Only the dark hath moved, only the night hath
    crept;
God is still there; He has not veiled his face,
  He has not closed his eye, He has not slept.

## THE OLD HOME.

THERE 'neath a group of sycamores
Shines out the quiet brooklet still,
Child of the river that still roars
And moves the great wheel of the mill.
The dust lies thick upon the road,
And on each thistle-top and fence;
The meadows where the cattle lowed
Are parched, and with a dreary sense
And heavy heart I sadly view
The scenes my happy boyhood knew.

Where in the vale we used to play,
The iron horses steam their way;
Where with the reaping hook and scythe
The sturdy farm-hands met for toil,
Their daily combat with the soil,
For riches that the fair earth yields,
The conquest of her splendid fields,
And righteous pillage of her spoil;
Where reapers 'mid the harvest wars
Cut down the sheaves that seemed for miles
To spread abroad in serried files,
Where waved their peaceful scimetars,
On every valley, hill and glade,

We see the hand of commerce laid,
And all our meadows marts for trade.

But still the peaceful graveyard lies
Serene amid the bustling town,
And on each tombstone from the skies
The flakes of snow come softly down.
And one there sleeps, dear girl! how well
I loved her matters not to tell;
Death's angel knocked upon her door,
And heaven had one angel more.

'Twas here I passed my early days
Amid this valley's winding ways;
'Twas here I culled from childhood's path
The flowers whose very memories shed
A light upon life's aftermath.

Farewell, bright village of my youth,
Your charms can never be estranged,
Though all your lovely scenes are gone,
And all your vales so sadly changed.
Farewell, dear childhood's vision splendid,
Where joy my every step attended;
Dear village, where at the fair portal
Of youth I stood, when life began,
Your pictures still shall glad the man.
Thank God, that memory is immortal!

## COMMENCEMENT DAY.

MARCHING slowly, one by one,
With their faces like the sun,
In their white robes, like some fair
Phantoms wove of sky and air;
Stern the old preceptor stands,
Grasps the rule within his hands;
Grim and solemn as he looks,
With a wise air learned from books,
'Neath his steady, sunken eye,
Something softer I descry.

O, child-hearted pedagogue,
Fortunatus loves thee, rogue!
Thou a gnarled oak bent by storm,
Angel in a satyr's form.
Well they love thee; they divine
All the sweetness that is thine;
In the hard lines of thy face,
Deepest tenderness can trace;
They have seen thy fingers stray
In that kindly, absent way,
With thy hand caressing laid
On the head of some bright maid,

While thy face a glory swept,
And a sudden radiance leapt
To those faded, sunken eyes,
Like a flash from clouded skies.

Ah, he holds their sunny looks
Sweeter than his dreary books.
Tender master, little flock,
I shall envy not, nor mock!
What were empires and great things,
Lands, and jewels, and crowns of kings,
All the wealth sunk in the seas,
To be high in hearts like these?

## FATHER DAMIEN.

PEACE hath her martyrdoms which far surpass
The glory of the battle, even as his—
True servant of thy Master, rise and pass;
Thou didst not in thy wisdom choose amiss.
For who shall weigh the satisfaction keen,
And that contentment from the consciousness
That death, which all men fear, whose shape was seen,
Came to thee, in the leper's guise, to bless—
And lives, deep in dark prisons, lit again
The lamps of love for thee, Pere Damien.

Who scorns him, hath not heard the song of life.
He hath not read the human heart aright,
He hath not scanned the meaning of the strife
Which self doth wage with soul, darkness with light.
He knoweth not the victory, nor the scope
Of such heroic aspiration—far
The music of such action singeth hope,
And is to some world mariner a star.
Thou makest for the future ages when
Mankind shall rise to thee, Pere Damien.

I say it fearless—caring not at all
  If death be newer life, or lasting sleep;
If in the arms of mother earth we fall,
  And nothing break our slumber, long and deep.
Or if for those who do a martyr's task
  At this world's portal waiting angels greet,
And there the names of all the faithful ask,
  And give the crown for cross—still, I repeat,
Which ever thing be true, both now and then,
  Thine was the better part, Pere Damien.

## THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW.

WHAT a thunder of drums! what a glitter of arms!
Where files the procession in shimmering lists;
What a pageant! as onward and out through the mists
Of the streets they advance mid the bugles' alarms.
We know that the throne, and the harp, and the lance
That redden in mist—all the blare and the bloom
Are but parcel and piece from the property room
And yet how the glare and the glitter enchants.

Men drunk with the pageant move on, and the pave
Resounds with the clattering hoofs of the steeds,
In their trappings of tinsel, and bugles and beads—
Ah, me! and this knighthood is dead in its grave
Several centuries gone—all its chivalry proud—
And the lie is the only thing real. Do I grieve

That the piece is a part of a child's make-
believe,
Just a palace of sand, just a castle of cloud?
Ah, no! there's a darker shade over it all;
It is this: that a wrong and a truth that would
out,
Are unheard in the noise of the multitude's
shout,
And the drums beating down some babe's agon-
ized call,
The wail of some orphan, some widow's appeal;
I tell you such music, if once understood,
Would sweep London streets with a mightier
flood
Of humanity, full of a holier zeal.

No pageant of chivalry dead in its grave,
No tinsel of knighthood, no sweep of a sword,
But the dawning to men of the face of their
Lord;
Of the Lord of a love that is mighty to save;
Who shall whisper, "To-night there is death in
the town,
Death that is death, just because of your law"—
This heard, then as near as could be without
flaw,
What a world would arise on the wreck of our
own?

## THE WATCHMAN.

"WATCHMAN, what of the night?"
Down from the tower there sped
His answer: "The east is red
With the blush of the morning light.
With sword and bayonet keen,
Armies have risen and gone,
But a spirit is speeding on
That only my eyes have seen.

"A spirit, radiant, bright,
Of love, with a God-like brow;
He veils his purpose now,
Till men shall read it aright.
And when they shall find the key
To his mystery, he will come,
Invisible and dumb
No more, till the end shall be."

"Alas!" I cried in grief,
"Oh, watchman of the night!
Ever the hope burns bright,
But there cometh no relief.

The clouds are midnight black,
  Yet up in the watch tower high
  Prophets saw signs in the sky,
Ages and ages back."

"Wait," said the calmer voice,
  Down from his higher height:
  "The war is long for the Right,
Despair, and your foes rejoice.
But the spirits of justice stand,
  And when Hope's watchfires burn,
  Re-armed to the fight they turn—
Hope is a sword in the hand.

"Fear not—the worst is past,
  Dungeon and prison wall;
  One move forward, and all
Is over and won at last.
A blow, and a cry for the right;
  At the blast of the battle horn
  The walls shall be overborne
That bar men out from the light."

## THE COMING POET.

* * * Yet such a poet will come. The world is ripe for great events, and wronged peoples are becoming stirred by emotions and inspired by hope. The man will surely be found fit to sing freedom's new song to a people about to realize the dream of a new heaven and a new earth.

—HENRY GEORGE'S *Standard.*

AT the gate of the morning we wait him,
At the dawn of a century new,
When men shall arise and see visions
And tyranny fade from the view;
When the rags and the tatters we're wearing
Are doffed for new mantles that seem
Habiliments fit for the angels—
He shall follow in wake of the dream!

To sing the new tune when our pulses
Are still, and our hearts shall be dust;
To give a new glory to girlhood,
To teach the strong man to be just.
To sing a new freedom for woman,
To break up the rivers again
Of Love, that the rock may be smitten
That prisons the sons of men.

What a song-burst shall fall on our hearing?
  What strains of new rapture, like those
That came to the ears of men steering
  Through Ægean seas, at the close
Of the day, when the Grecian evening
  With the flute of great Pan was shaken;
On the day of the world's new dawning
  A greater Pan shall awaken.

And music that lives in freedom
  Shall burst her barriers—far
Mounting and mounting in rapture
  To grasp the most infinite bar.
What a song!—like a lark's in the morning;
  What a hope!—for the day is here;
What a faith—long obscure in the night-time,
  Shines out supernaturally clear!

## LIBERTY AND LAW.

FREEDOM! what is Freedom but to take
Each man his hour as seemeth best to him;
His heritage of earth, his equal share
Of all the bounteous, overflowing world!
Bound with constraint, 'tis true, but such constraint
Meaning the equal freedom each with all.

To her be all our efforts dedicate;
Not the mad license of her counterfeit,
Mouthing her wild and frothy tumefaction
'Gainst Law The order of the universe
Is Law—in stellar space, and far beyond
The Law holds sway—here in the lives of men—
In their associations—in the thoughts
That such associations bring. Let man
Reading the Law transcribe it in the books.

That is true Freedom—in the sweet obeyance
Of Nature's order, though her goodly name
Found ever in the mouths of the destroyers,
The ignorant, the base, and they, alas!
Sometimes, who hope for betterment, made
A dark reproach. Freedom alone can come
Yoked with the Law of Freedom.

## AT POVERTY FLAT.

THERE'S a sound from a wheezy old fiddle,
  There's a moving of feet on the floor;
There is joy in the shabby apartments
  And dancing in room number four.
When the Shaughnessys and the O'Flannigans
  Give a party they know what they're at,
With Maggie and Tim the committee,
  The hustlers of Poverty Flat.

The kiss and the hand shake are honest,
  Have more of a kindly will
Than the statelier whispered greeting
  Of the folk upon Murray Hill.
And not in the land that Christmas
  A truer company sat
Than met in its homely plainness
  In the rooms of Poverty Flat.

And one with eyes like an angel's
  And a breath like the scent of the rose,
A darling of just two Summers,
  Ripples in laughs and crows
And grants impartial her kisses;
  Not the child of an empress, at that,

Combed and cleaned, makes a prettier picture
  Than the darling of Poverty Flat.

Months after the party is over
  I see a small hearse at the door,
And a long line of carriages reaching
  For several blocks or more.
And the children who stand at the doorstep
  Are hushing their eager chat;
On their faces a sorrow and stillness,
  For death is at Poverty Flat.

I look at the sober faces
  Of children who bate their breath;
Oh, strange to the heart of childhood
  The heavy hand of Death!
And I look at the bell-knob that's broken,
  And the little white streamer thereat,
And I know she has gone, the dear baby,
  And darling of Poverty Flat.

She went like a snow-flake that melteth,
  Or a flame that's blown out by the wind,
But she left from garret to basement
  A something like heaven behind.
Maybe God in his far away mansion—
  Though I hazard no guess about that—
Keeps a sweet and particular chamber
  For the darling of Poverty Flat.

## TO THE SEA.

I TOLD my sorrows to the sea.
  The beautiful, the glad blue sea;
It held my secrets well—such faith
  No mortal ever kept with me.

Old gray-beard sea, lift thy white flag
  On hoary heights, and carry war
Where thy white lances, flashing far,
  Assail each stern and beetling crag.

But break not with me, I charge,
  Thou friendly sea, that did so long,
By rock and hill, and pebbly marge,
  Teach me the subtle springs of song.

The sorrows that I gave thee came
  In many a sweet, melodious burst,
And tipped my tender muse with flame,
  And taught it a diviner thirst.

They err who call thee cruel or cold,
  I gave thee all, yet nothing lack;
Oh, blessed sea, my secrets hold
  If this be how you give them back!

## THE CINCINNATI CONVENTION.

IN from the farm and the cattle-range—
Something in politics new and strange—
Men with their faces bronzed and set,
Common men, who are feeling yet
That old fervor from which arose
Cromwell's deeds and Milton's prose.
Sneer, if you will, but have no doubt
There's a spirit back of that mighty shout.
Ye cannot quiet with specious pens
The sense of wrong in those loud "Amens,"
And "Bless the Lord"—so the very air
Had less of politics than of prayer!
These are the farmers who marched one day
To the music of fife and drum away,
To face the Southern steel and gun—
The pride of Kansas in 'sixty-one!

Angry men with a sense of wrong;
Scarcely one in that motley throng,
Striking boldly, but blindly knew
What it would profit them to do.
Yet, in spite of their schemes of folly,
Something of deepest melancholy,

Something of sympathy, alarm,
For his hopeless life and his mortgaged farm,
Stirs within us thus to know
The party he served has left him so.
For all his service she gives him tears—
Kansas has trusted her twenty years!

"Bleeding Kansas," that turns and rends,
With a cry of agony, falsest friends!
Whatever desperate things are done,
Wicked or silly, never one
Can mar the Republic's life like those
Wrought by the Kansan's wily foes.
Not all the harm he can do outweighs
A breath of your Dudleys and your Quays!

## JUSTICE.

GIVE Justice her apportioned place,
And rout the fierce and ravening Beast;
In gardens of the human race
She scorns no humblest flower the least.
In her wide realm no arm is bound,
Her share is equal, each with each;
She grants, for all may tread her ground,
The fool and Gœthe equal speech.

Justice hath never eye for creed,
Nor race, nor outward hue of skin;
Only the color of the deed,
Only the blackness of the sin.
And Justice asketh when he errs,
This brother, sister, mine and thine,
If the misdeeds of his or hers
Be not the fault of yours and mine.

Hers is the saving power that makes
Republics strong; their fabrics sure;
With it a mightier spirit wakes
That longer than the hills endure.
Oh, spirit, urging strong and far,
Teach thou Columbia's sons to see
The rising of a blessed star
Above the cradle of the free.

## SEND THEM BACK.

[The four Samoans dying in captivity. See N. Y. *World*, June 29, 1891.]

BACK to Samoa! Send them back,
  These helpless ones, to die;
Across the ocean's stormy track,
  Beneath their native sky.

When gratitude, when pity fail
  In you, a thankless host,
Recall, O mariner, the gale
  Along Samoa's coast.

Brave men, if of a darker hue,
  Who may no glory win;
The blood of brotherhood runs true
  Beneath the dusky skin.

The gale may sweep Samoa's coast,
  And songs brave things rehearse;
But good Manogi's deeds shall boast
  Of scarce a single verse.

All that they ask is leave to die
  'Neath skies of tropic calms,
To make their beds of death and lie
  In island homes of palms!

## A GHOST IN CHURCH.

I SAW him pass with solemn pace,
  And eyes that from his hat's broad brim
Looked awe, as if he saw the face
  Of some dark angel over him.
I saw him, and drew back aghast;
  The likeness of no living man—
The spectre of a saintly past—
  Walked in this ghostly Puritan!

The air was in an instant still;
  To let him pass they drew apart;
And in my veins a sudden chill
  Hushed the loud beatings of my heart.
The long and richly blazoned aisles,
  The gold cross on the summit's spire,
Rising above the glistening tiles,
  Stirred his slow Puritanic ire.

He mingles with the haughty throng
  Who honor with a grand display,
With ritual, liturgy, and song,
  The meekest spirit of His day.

Not thus of old did men commune;
  He sees the worship of the past
Altered to public prayer and tune,
  The mode of the ecclesiast.

And yet my spirit not the less
  Prefers the century's freer range;
And not for all the earnestness
  Of that old creed would I exchange
The faith which science, working out,
  Gives for the universal plan.
My soul it cannot turn about
  For thee, thou ghostly Puritan!

## DOUBT.

WE weary sometimes of this ceaseless war,
And wonder if the victory, when it comes,
With blare of trumpet, and the beat of drums,
Will be as glorious as our fancies are.
Why should we struggle? Life's a little span;
With tooth and claw let's make a pathway through.
To die, or live—what matters it to man?
Sooner or late, there's end of me and you.

And yet, and yet! while musing in this way,
Something will whisper, and the heart take hope.
Who fights Truth's battles lives a life each day,
And then the darkness clears through which we grope.
What matters it, oh, watcher of the night,
Whether or not the Captain sees or hears?
Or thy heart's pierced by shaft that's aimed aright,
And thou cry out—and God shall stop His ears?

Stand to the ramparts! in the walls are men
Sickened to death. Children and women pine.

And thou art strong and merciful. Again
  Face the proud foe, and make the warrior's sign,
Lift high the flag! hope on, hope on, and trust;
  Cease questioning, and close the tremulous lips.
Fight on, fight on! simply because we must,
  Until the time bring dawning or eclipse!

## ON THE RIVER.

THE black wharves stretch their length along
By ceaseless waters lapped and kissed;
The pained whistle and the gong
Break muffled through the cloying mist.

The lights upon the bridge are low,
The tug-boats shudder through the fog,
As shapeless as a giant log,
The ocean steamer looms below.

There breathes a sound, a sullen moan,
That comes not from the splashing wheel,
Nor waters dashed from prow to keel,
But deeper down, a troubled tone.

The great spires of the city loom,
The pillars of the bridge arise—
I think how many a darkened room
Is darker now for dying eyes.

The heavy, sullen fog uplifts,
A keener cold upon my cheeks
I feel—the night to Westward drifts,
Morn stains the East with purple streaks.

Oh, vessels, with your massive girth,
  Your trembling lights that shrink and start,
It seems there are three things on earth,
  Night, and the river, and my heart.

## A GRECIAN GLOVE.

A MOULDERED glove worn by a Grecian maid
In Athens, twenty centuries ago,
Is to my curious vision here displayed,
With melancholy fingers in a row;
No tiny thing that you'd imagine, maybe,
Was made for hand of doll or some girl baby.

Oh, full white hand, strong in its grasp but tender,
No chalky thing of spectral distortion,
Firm, with the fingers not too long or slender,
A noble hand of generous proportion.
Her body knew not fashion—monstrous vandal—
In her loose flowing robe and Grecian sandal.

A hand to stroke a brow with when it aches,
Something to hold in evenings when you tarry;
Something to kiss when love its parting takes,
Something to sue for, if you care to marry.
Oh, for a hand like this, oh, precious glove!
Oh, lost white fingers of the Attic love!

## FALLEN FROM THE RAMPARTS.

WILLIAM T. CROASDALE.

THE bravest watcher is gone
From the ramparts where we tread;
But we must go fighting on
Stoutly, though through it all
Low down by the wall,
Lieth the Captain, dead.

When the great fight is fought,
And the truth that we strove for is won,
Honor and fame are as naught;
But the knowledge of truth and the light
Shall sweeten our pillow at night
When all is over and done.

And he who fell by the wall—
Our Achilles, bruised in the heel—
What if the rind over all
Was rough? yet the core was sweet.
Here was a man complete,
All of Damascus steel!

## EXPOSTULATION.

EARTH, facing the fierce sun,
Carries her freight of human pain and woe
Time's turbid stream upon—
On what a questless errand do we go!

Cruel earth, that ever sails
Onward and on, where space is limitless,
And light for signal fails;
Whither she bears the bravest dare not guess.

But then why question this?
Are there not eyes of love—like eyes of thine—
And crimson mouths to kiss?—
Are there not song children and flowers and wine?

The dreams of art, the pen
Of those who grasped the secret of a thought,
Or held the hearts of men,
Or some unspoken aspiration caught?

Men who are brave and true,
Who love their fellows, even as Jesus did—
Are these not worth to you
The pang of doubt for mysteries that are hid?

## LINES.

YOU who have walked in the wilderness, you who have slept in the shade,
Seeing no sun in the shadow, learning the gods to upbraid;
You who have marveled and murmured, seeing no star in the skies—
Lift up your heads from your bosoms! here is a light for your eyes.
Man is a man, not a creature armed with claw and tooth,
Loving the right as he sees it, hating the wrong and untruth;
Full of a worship for freedom—be it not said to his shame,
Fighting the fight of the tyrant always in liberty's name!
Come with us now, for not Moses, blinded by all that he saw,
Read in the thunders of Sinai purer or perfecter law.
Truth, for a thousand Pilates sneering in vain despite,

Still may be won to the striver, light to the searcher of light.
Thought is a breaker of idols, idols of iron wrought;
He who would win for freedom, first must be free in thought.
Prejudice holds us in prison—thus do the barriers bind
Out from the vista of vision all of the children of mind.
Come with us, friend; there is breaking over the hills that were gray
With the mists of the old world's twilight the dawn of a brighter day.
Whether we who have hoped shall see it, God knows, and His will be done—
Enough that the standard's lifted, and the onward march begun!
Enough that those who have struggled shall lie on the couch of death,
And hear the tramp of the legions, and bless them with latest breath!
Enough to hope that the infant that smiles at its mother's knee
Is heir to the grander future, and the earth that is to be!

## THE PASSING OF WINTER.

THIS is the day of the coming of Summer;
Out from the rushes, sappy and sleek,
The air is alive with twitter and hummer,
And the bird on the bough is pointing his beak,
The winds from the sea stir the brambles and grasses,
The strength of the earth is alive in the boughs;
And the spirit responds to the message that passes
Through tinkle of sheep bells and lowing of cows.

The grasses seem sentient, the spiritless matter
Endowed with a life that is purpling the veins
Of the leaves, handing down where their rivulets clatter
Their music to ears that can read the refrains;
There's a singing of birds, there's a murmur of bees,
There's a sound in the rill and a rush in the green,
There's a buzzing below, there's a harp in the trees,
There is singing and calling from seen and unseen.

A voice! a voice that is back of each sound,
  The bird sings, but back of the birds is a note,
The insect may pipe at my feet on the ground
  But a piping steals out from invisible throat,
The bee hums, but there is a humming beyond,
  Far off the sheep's bleat, but a farthermost cry,
Cometh in; and the frogs croak away in the pond;
  But a voice more distinct over all makes reply.

'Tis he, the old Monarch, deposed by the Summer,
  Who fled to the woods, when his throne had
    gone down,
'Tis he, who in song of the bird, and the hummer
  Of insect, bewaileth the loss of his crown,
For the grief at his heart is of sadness the sorest;
  Go deep in the woodland and bark to the tone
That he strikes from his wind harp of pines in the
    forest,
  They drove him far into the hills from his
    throne.

## WHEN I WAS A LAD.

WHY can't I see a play as good
As when I was a boy,
Why can't a book to-day impart
The same unbounded joy?
Why are the cherries that I eat
Not cherries like I had,
Some twenty seasons now gone by,
When I was but a lad?

Why are the grapes for which I pay
The very highest price,
Compared to those I stole one day
Not near one half so nice?
What do the watermelons lack,
That once were ripe and sweet?
Oh, Time, restore their flavors back
You stole with flying feet!

Why do not suns arise as when
In years ago they rose?
Why are not sunsets quite so grand,
As once, at evening's close?
Why do not stars as brightly shine
As when, the daylight done,
They shone in years when I was ten?
Alas! for thirty-one!

## TO A BEAUTIFUL OLD LADY.

IS woman the worse for being old,
  Dear eyes, dim through the gold rimmed glasses?
Are the heart and sympathies growing cold—
Is love too late as a tale retold,
  Now that the summer of lifetime passes?

Grandam, age has its beauty too,
  Spite of the wrinkles and hands grown yellow.
Dear old lady, I quaff to you
Flavor of draught of an olden brew;
  Sweeter for years that have made it mellow.

Beauty of spirit, sitting there,
  Beauty of deeds that are past relating;—
Charm of a kindness all too rare
In the dear eyes under the snowy hair,
  There in life's twilight resting, waiting!

Charm of the soul that is shining through
  The frosts of her seventy years or over;
Who for all of the loves we knew
Would not ardently kneel and sue
  Even now to be called her lover?

## IN THE WOODS.

THIS is God's day—a voice is back
  Of every slightest noise,
  Of every woodland voice!
Oh, what doth spirit lack,
Save that it cannot rise
  To heights that whisper of
  Realms of diviner love,
And blue and stormless skies.
I rise to rapture, but am bound—
The bat sweeps round, and round, and round.

I walk through sentient grasses where
  They hide them in the underbrush—
  In pauses of the birds, the hush
Of God is on the air.
The insects pipe—the bird he points
  His beak upon the bough;
  Far off the lowing of the cow
Comes in—the time anoints
My spirit with a special balm,
And jarring days are lost in calm.

In halls of leafy canopies,
  Roofed in by vault of blue,
  Goes ever sounding through
The song of birds, the hum of bees;
The locust with his violin,
  The beetle with his hum—
  Far off comes faintly rolling in
The rat-tat of the drum,
Which some lone soldier partridge beats
And Echo catches, and repeats.

Ye untaught choir of the woods,
  Ye humble choristers of God,
  Make musical these solitudes;—
Oh, man is more than clod,
And lifted on the wing aspires
  To know the meaning hid
  In murmuring of the feathered choirs,
And petulant katy-did;
And yet soul cannot rise from ground,—
The bat sweeps round, and round, and round.

## ANN.

DEAR maid, though maiden thou art not,
Yet full of kindliest impulse still;
I think with sadness on thy lot,
Poor Ann, and tears my eyelids fill.
Yet much thy noble deeds shall blot
Of guilty things, whose power to kill
Thy highest nature, wounds thee not,
Which keeps its finer virtues still.

Stabbed with the darts of worldly scorn,
And soiled with touch of evil men,
Thy woman's glory reft and shorn,
And lost all that thou mightst have been.
Ah, what wast thou in childhood's morn,
And need I ask, who knew thee then?
No fairer creature earth hath borne
Than that same heaven-eyed child of ten.

Oh, world, that sits in Honor's seat,
And visits as a judge the sin,
Ye cannot know that strange deceit
Of words a woman's heart to win;

Which won, it tramples under feet.
  For *him* doors swing to enter in;
For *her* the darkness of the street;—
  But Christ shall know his Magdalen!

So, outcast girl, whose feet are sore,
  Look up—the skies are dull and wan.
Life's landscape hath not sun nor shore,
  Pity shines not in the eyes of man;
The earth hath wisdom, but her lore
  Thou canst not comprehend nor scan;
But His words, "Go and sin no more,"
  To thee are luminous, dear Ann.

## QUATRAINS.

### THE NATION.

The holy fire of nationality
Burneth a whit no less
Upon the people's hearth, than in
The halls of purple palaces.

### FAME.

Fame is a glow-worm, that above the gloom
Of grave yards hovers; 'tis a barren wreath,
Or a deep drum that sounds above the tomb,
And cannot wake the sleepers underneath.

### LOVE.

Each jewel of life we yield, each joy we sing,
Uncaring, we resign at our last breath;
But Love, majestic Love, is the sole thing
We carry to our death.

### PREDILECTION.

Some days, some nights, hold fuller draughts of peace;
Some suns are fairer, falling in the west;
Some casual face hath wondrous charm to please;
Some tone on hill or sea is choicer than the rest.

### IN GOD'S OWN TIME.

Fear not; the overhanging veil
That shrouds us with its mist and crime
Shall lifted be, and truth prevail,
In God's own time.

### HUMILITY.

Thou monarch sure who, day by day,
Dost rule so large a stretch of space,
Sun that a universe can sway,
Yet stoops to kiss a daisy's face.

### A PROVERB.

If rolling stones no moss can gather,
Still rolling snow-balls larger grow;
And so I should inquire, rather,
Is moss worth any more than snow?

### RALEIGH.

Let it be said of him, whate'er his crimes,
For which the hotness of his spirit pleads,
Soft shines against the darkness of his times
The whiteness of his deeds.

### RECOGNITION.

I would not know her for the cruelly slain,
The early dead—e'en though she dwell above,
I would not meet the angel of my love,
Only my love's self would I meet again.

## IN THE BEGINNING.

WITH what strange terrors held his breath
That man who first of men knew Death;

Who saw, first of the human race,
Low at his feet some dear, dead face,

Trembling, while he strove to guess
The riddle of that silentness!

# HUMOROUS.

## TO BEN HARRISON.

I'VE BIN pesterd thinkin about it, Frend Ben,
And I wanted to wright you agen and agen;
For its plagy perplexin. You see how it is,
The boys at the shop think thares suthin amis,
And they ast arkard qwestions bout what you
are doin,
Wile they are continally frettin and stewin,
For wurk at the place is alarminly slack,
And but haf of the hands on last Mondy went
back —
"Laid off on account of stagnashun." In cource,
"He was sorry to do it." I marched with the Boss
And held up one end of the banner, September,
Eighteen-eighty-eight, and I clarly remember
The letterin on it—twas, "Workinmen say
They want steady wurk and abundence of pay,
And holdin to this reserlution, intend
To vote for the party that stands as thare frend."

We did it the party went in, but I gess
That the promises got kinder lost in the press
For the offices; sartinly nothins been don
For the boys at *our* shop. They had lots of fun

With the banners and tortchlights in "whoopin
up" days;
Now some on 'em qwestions as to wether it pays
To continner to do it—and all of the stack on em
Have a vage sort o'feelin yure partys went back
on em.

Now, Ben, I voted for you and am greevin,
That my shop-mates suspect you were only
deceevin,
And I wish when youve time twixt appointin' to
places
The heelers and wurkers, youde see to *our* cases.

For sum of the boys are inklined to be scrump-
shus,
And praps, at the mildest, a little rambunkshus;
And the use of sware turms is increasing a little
With the men who sit outside the shop-dore and
whittle.
As for me, it is only the facts Im relatin—
Just facts, wile I sit on a stone, cogitatin.

## MARY'S LITTLE LAMB.

MARY had a little lamb,
Its wool was white as snow;
We used to weave it into cloth,
But that was long ago.

They put a tariff on one day,
The woolen mills shut down,
And why the stocks have ceased to pay
Ask Mr. Ammidown!

Oh, Mary and her little lamb!
How charming were their ways!
She took the lamb to school with her
In those low-tariff days.

Now little maidens' wraps are wove
Not as they were of yore—
The lamb that went to school one day,
Now goes to school no more.

The wool from off dear Mary's lamb
Once Mary's figure graced;
Now Mary wears a cotton gown.
And clothes of shoddy waste.

If you will calculate the tax,
And are not quite a clam,
You'll learn a lesson at the school
From Mary and her Lamb!

## THE PASSING OF THE SHEPHERD.

ONCE the nomadic Eastern man,
The shepherd in Damascus, brown
And stalwart, on the fleece of sheep
To slumber lay him down.

On whitened fleece, so fair and soft,
Shorn from his flock—alas!
The Western man, a shepherd. too,
Sees strange things come to pass.

Not, as the brown nomadic man
On Eastern hills reclined at ease,
The Western shepherd lays him down
On folds and folds of bedded fleece.

The flock of sheep he hoped to sell
For woolen clothing in the shops,
Now chiefly find their way—ah me!—
To butcher-stores, as mutton-chops.

If you would know why this is so,
It wont be hard to find the cause;
See rates on wool—the schedule K,
And Section 2—of Tariff Laws!

## SONG OF THE SHIRT.

(Forty per cent. ad valorem.)

WITH fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sits at a taxed machine
With high-taxed needle and thread.
Tax! tax! tax!
In her poverty she must pay
A tax upon everything she buys
From her wages, day by day.

Tax! tax! tax!
With the body growing thin,
But the Welchmen out in the Western mines
Are taking out the tin!
Seam and gusset and band,
Till her hands can work no more;
But the tin-plate lords may drink champagne
As she faints upon the floor!

Work! work! work!
With the comforts of life aloof,
With the higher rent for the higher tax
On the tin upon the roof.

It's Oh! to be a slave
  Along with the pauper Turk,
Or a sewing woman who pays a tax
  On unprotected work.

With fingers weary and worn,
  She presses her aching head;
While the party levies its taxes on
  Machine and needle and thread.
And she heaves a little sigh
  That is silent and soft, but deep;
"Alas! that men are so prone to lie;
Alas! that prices should be so high,
  And wooden men so cheap!"

## TO ESCAPE THE TARIFF.

HE wed a mermaid in a coral sea,
Dear me! Dear me!
For the needs of housekeeping so little require—
No coal, no fire;
And they lived upon pollywogs, be what they may,
I really can't say;
But the one thing that urged him to live in the sea—
He was wise, you'll agree—
Was this: as he said, though his home it was mean,
With the people marine,
The hands of McKinley don't reach to the sea—
Dear me! Dear me!

And as for the dresses the mermaids don,
There's no tariff on,
Which is an advantage, you'll readily guess,
In the matter of dress;
For mermaids wear, as you may recall,
No dresses at all;
There are sea-weed cloaks, but no plush ones—
No Dobson and Sons;
And when they travel, it isn't, you know,
By rail they go—
There are no steel rails in the depth of the sea—
No Carnegie!

## ONE OF THE POETS.

"THERE is no joy," he sung, and painted black
All human kind, this pessimist deceiving;
"There is no mirth, nothing but grief and grieving,
Nothing save sorrows all along life's track,
Sore pains and pitfalls;" (such alliterations
Our poets most prefer who ape the fashion).
With gentle verse, in musical gradations,
He reprobated every human passion;
And as he wrote, with satisfaction smitten,
He thrilled with joy to read what he had written!

## AN APPOINTMENT.

IN Heaven at the fourth jasper wall we'll meet,
Just in the shining pathway of the sun,
There I'll await you coming down the street,
Not as an an angel, with big wings upon
Your shoulders; but in every line and feature
The same dear, lovely and familiar creature.
Come in that favorite skirt of spotted lawn,
The hair untwisted, yellow as the dawn,
The dear poke bonnet shadowing the brown eyes,
Where such a wealth of dear affection lies.
Other than this I would not have you come,
Your cheeks like fair twin peaches in their bloom,
The firm strong shoulders, and the brown sash placed,
A careless girdle, at your tapering waist;
For huge great wings such as your artists paint
Must sorely discommode the agile saint.

## THE DIFFERENCE.

HOW the spiral smoke wreaths curl!—
Years ago I met a girl,
First maid in a Spanish town,
Tall, and as a berry brown;
Lissome, dusky, proud brunette,
I am dreaming of her yet,
While I sit and scent the keen
Odor of the nicotine.

She in Spanish town afar,
Lights the same brand of cigar,
Sees the spiral smoke wreaths rise
With those Andalusian eyes.
She who lolls where leagues of sea
Roll between her heart and me,
Muses in the self same way
On the man she saw to-day!

## FROM MY WINDOW.

SHE sits and sews—what arts refine
The work of fingers feminine—
The mingled hues of light and gray
That make life's patchwork and crotchet;
She weaves and weaves so prettily
The lines of Time's embroidery!
The web of some man's life is wrought
In subtle workings of her thought.
I watch her from my window-sill—
Night and the day she's sewing still.
I waft a kiss, and close the blind,
And watch the lattice-work behind.
I know, alas! she has a beau,
Coarse-threaded, with the broadest seams,
Unfit for the fine hemstitched dreams
Of any fair Miss Sew and Sew!

## IN DOUBT.

MY little girl has eyes—just like the eyes
Of any other girl in town—dear me!
Why can't I rave about the azure skies,
Or the blue depths of the Pacific sea?
She walks—not "like a queen"—but just the way
That ordinary people get along.
She is n't like a woman in a play,
Or almond-eyed divinity in song.
She lives, such circumstances surrounded with
As best befits plain Eleanora Smith!

She is not fair as other lovers paint
Their sweethearts, though she's pretty and *petite*,
She has n't *all* the virtues of a saint,
Although she's good, and excellent, and neat.
There's hint of down upon her upper lip;
Perhaps she's just a trifle commonplace,
Save for an air of quiet mastership
That says she knows and can assert her place.
As I can't hold her all the world above,
I now begin to think I'm not in love!

## BALLADE OF SOME FAIR WOMEN.

I KNOW so many girls, one may
  Despair of naming them, and yet,
There's pretty Polly, Bess and May,
  Who holds her dainty *vinaigrette*
In such a perfect, charming way:
  I'm scarcely sure I may not set
My cap—though heart inclines that way,
  I have not quite decided yet.

Louisa talks of music; say,
  Who know her, do you not regret,
When listening to the wondrous play
  Of her quick wit, you could not set
Her words in writing, so some day
  You'd read them when with cares beset?
I'd ask her hand, but—well-a-day!
  I have not quite decided yet.

And there is dear Francesca; stay!
  The simplest, sweetest, bright brunette
That ever stole a heart away.
  How first I saw her, soul forget!

So sweet Francesca looked that day
  When grasses with the dews were wet,
And morning woke the hills of gray—
  Still I have not decided yet.

ENVOY.

Dear me, dear me! how shall I stay,
  And see the seasons roll and set,
And bring to each her bridal day,
  And still be undecided yet.

## THE CHURCH SCANDAL.

Young Mrs. Jones hears that the minister has been removed because of his want of Orthodoxy.

NOT orthodox? What's that? I'm sure
He's just as nice as nice can be;
He spoke so kindly of the poor—
He sends his compliments to me.
"Not sound," they say, Oh, dear, oh, dear!
I'm sure he looked quite bright and strong.
What are these curious things I hear?
What *is* it in the man that's wrong?

They say he sneers at Jonah's whale,
And gourd that withered in a night;
And has his doubts about the tale
Of Sampson and the lion's fight.
But what of that? At such small things
What inconceivable distress!
How well he showed at christenings!
What perfect pastoral tenderness!

Not orthodox! So out and down
He goes, for thus the deacons vote:

I worked him up a dressing gown,
I've got his tender, perfumed note.
He praised my muffins—kissed the child
He has such sweet, entrancing ways;
I feel I can be reconciled
To life's vexations when he prays.

Now for his doctrines, doubts and all,
I do not care a rush—that's flat;
They say his learning made him fall—
*Theirs* never will—I'm sure of that.
I gave him heavy wraps and shawls,
I knit him caps and woolen socks;
I'll miss his ministerial calls—
*He's* not a horrid orthodox!

## HISTORY WRITERS.

I'M grievously put out; I've learned
  That all my early reading,
In youth imperfectly discerned,
  Is frightfully misleading.
And much that isn't true depicts;—
  My faith is sorely smitten;
I find that history conflicts
  With history as it 's written.

My faith in Wellington dies out;
  "Up, boys, and at 'em;" who
'Mid cannon boom could hear him shout
  That speech at Waterloo?
Nelson—his words of lasting fame
  I thrill to read, but wonder
If any heard that voice exclaim
  'Mid cannon tongues of thunder.

Now, Nero's blackest record scan,
  But you may find another,
That proves him just as nice a man
  As ever killed his mother.
And Prussian Frederick with Carlyle
  A veritable giant,
The regal creature stalks awhile,
  Strong, steady and defiant.

Then read Macaulay, and you are
  Before a brute inhuman;
A blustering warrior making war
  Upon a sickly woman.
Puzzled at all of this, I'm full
  Of misery and dejection;
Jackson was *not* a roaring bull,
  Nor Washington perfection.

"I cannot lie"—but have they lied,
  The men who said George said it?
"Sheridan's ride" was not the ride
  The clever artist made it.
I loved the North, but cannot think
  Without some explanations
That Southern "rebs" preferred to drink
  From Northern skulls potations.

I'm protestant—yet can't accept
  Defences for my ism
From Fox (his Martyr's Book *yclept*)
  Or Durwin's "Romanism."
These history writers leave, I vow,
  Me minus sail or tiller;
I'm reading all my history now
  According to JOE MILLER.

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